Senate



General Assembly

File No. 624

January Session, 2007

Substitute Senate Bill No. 1438

Senate, April 30, 2007

The Committee on Judiciary reported through SEN. MCDONALD of the 27th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING NOTICE OF CERTAIN PROBATE COURT HEARINGS AND THE FILING OF CERTAIN REPORTS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. Subsection (c) of section 45a-607 of the general statutes is
- 2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (Effective
- 3 October 1, 2007):
- 4 (c) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, upon receipt
- of an application for temporary custody under this section, the court
- 6 shall promptly set the time and place for <u>a</u> hearing to be held on such
- 7 application. The court shall order notice of the hearing on temporary
- 8 custody to be given, [by regular mail] at least five days prior to the
- 9 <u>date of the hearing,</u> to the Commissioner of Children and Families <u>by</u>
- 10 <u>first class mail</u> and [by personal service in accordance with section 52-
- 11 50] to both parents and to the minor child, if over twelve years of age,
- 12 [at least five days prior to the date of the hearing,] by personal service
- or service at the parent's usual place of abode or the minor's usual
- 14 place of abode, as the case may be, in accordance with section 52-50,

except that in lieu of personal service on, or service at the usual place of abode of, a parent or the father of a minor child born out of wedlock who is either an applicant or who signs under penalty of false statement a written waiver of [personal] such service on a form provided by the Probate Court Administrator, the court may order notice to be given by [certified] first class mail [, return receipt requested, deliverable to addressee only,] at least five days prior to the date of the hearing. If the whereabouts of the parents are unknown, or if such delivery cannot reasonably be effected, then notice shall be ordered to be given by publication. Such notice may be combined with the notice under section 45a-609, as amended by this act, or with the notice required under section 45a-716, as amended by this act. If the parents are not residents of the state or are absent from the state, the court shall order notice to be given by [certified] first class mail [, return receipt requested, deliverable to addressee only,] at least five days prior to the date of the hearing. If the whereabouts of the parents are unknown, or if delivery cannot reasonably be effected, the court may order notice to be given by publication. Any notice by publication under this subsection shall be in a newspaper which has a circulation at the last-known place of residence of the parents. In either case, such notice shall be given at least five days prior to the date of the hearing, except in the case of notice of <u>a</u> hearing on immediate temporary custody under subsection (b) of this section. If the applicant alleges that the whereabouts of a respondent are unknown, such allegation shall be made under penalty of false statement and shall also state the last-known address of the respondent and the efforts which have been made by the applicant to obtain a current address. The applicant shall have the burden of ascertaining the names and addresses of all parties in interest and of proving to the satisfaction of the court that [he or she] the applicant used all proper diligence to discover such names and addresses. Except in the case of newspaper notice, such notice shall include: (1) The time and place of the hearing, (2) a copy of the application for removal or application for termination of parental rights, (3) a copy of the motion for temporary custody, (4) any affidavit or verified petition filed with the motion for temporary custody, (5)

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any other documents filed by the applicant, (6) any other orders or 50 51 notices made by the court of probate, and (7) any request for 52 investigation by the Department of Children and Families or any other 53 person or agency. Such notice shall also inform the respondent of the 54 right to have an attorney represent [him or her] the respondent and, if 55 [he or she] the respondent is unable to obtain or pay for an attorney, 56 the respondent may request the court of probate to appoint an attorney 57 to represent [him or her] the respondent. Newspaper notice shall 58 include such facts as the court may direct.

- Sec. 2. Subsection (b) of section 45a-609 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective* October 1, 2007):
 - (b) The court shall order notice of the hearing to be given, [by regular mail] at least ten days before the date of the hearing, to the Commissioner of Children and Families by first class mail and [by personal service in accordance with section 52-50] to both parents and to the minor, if over twelve years of age, [at least ten days before the time of the hearing,] by personal service or service at the parent's usual place of abode or the minor's usual place of abode, as the case may be, <u>in accordance with section 52-50</u>, except that in lieu of personal service on, or service at the usual place of abode of, a parent or the father of a child born out of wedlock who is either a petitioner or who signs under oath a written waiver of [personal] such service on a form provided by the Probate Court Administrator, the court may order notice to be given by [certified] first class mail [, return receipt requested, deliverable to addressee only, at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing. If such delivery cannot reasonably be effected, then notice shall be ordered to be given by publication. If the parents reside out of or are absent from the state, the court shall order notice to be given by [certified] first class mail [, return receipt requested, deliverable to addressee only, at least ten days prior to the date of the hearing. If the whereabouts of the parents are unknown, or if delivery cannot reasonably be effected, the court may order notice to be given by publication. Any notice by publication under this subsection shall

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84 be in [some] a newspaper which has a circulation at the parents' 85 last-known place of residence. In either case, such notice shall be given 86 at least ten days before the [time] date of the hearing. If the applicant 87 alleges that the whereabouts of a respondent are unknown, such 88 allegation shall be made under penalty of false statement and shall also 89 state the last-known address of the respondent and the efforts which 90 have been made by the applicant to obtain a current address. The 91 applicant shall have the burden of ascertaining the names and 92 addresses of all parties in interest and of proving to the satisfaction of 93 the court that [he or she] the applicant used all proper diligence to 94 discover such names and addresses. Except in the case of newspaper 95 notice, the notice of hearing shall include the following: (1) The notice 96 of hearing, (2) the application for removal of parent as guardian, (3) 97 any supporting documents and affidavits filed with such application, 98 (4) any other orders or [notice] <u>notices</u> made by the Court of Probate, 99 and (5) any request for investigation by the Department of Children 100 and Families or any other person or agency. Such notice shall also 101 inform the respondent of the right to have an attorney represent [him 102 or her] the respondent in the matter, and if [he or she] the respondent 103 is unable to obtain or to pay an attorney, the respondent may request 104 the Court of Probate to appoint an attorney to represent [him or her] 105 the respondent. Newspaper notice shall include such facts as the court 106 may direct.

Sec. 3. Subsection (c) of section 45a-616 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2007*):

(c) Upon receipt by the court of an application pursuant to this section, the court shall set a time and place for a hearing to be held within thirty days of the application, unless the court requests an investigation in accordance with the provisions of section 45a-619, in which case the court shall set a day for hearing not more than thirty days following receipt of the results of the investigation. The court shall order notice of the hearing to be given to the minor, if over twelve years of age, by [certified] first class mail [, return receipt requested,

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deliverable to the addressee only,] at least ten days prior to the date of

- the hearing. In addition, notice by [regular] first class mail shall be
- given to the petitioner and all other parties in interest known by the
- 121 court.
- Sec. 4. Section 45a-671 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2007*):
- 124 (a) Within forty-five days of the filing of such application for
- guardianship in the Court of Probate, such court shall assign a time
- 126 and place for hearing such application. Notwithstanding the
- provisions of section 45a-7, the court may hold the hearing on [said]
- 128 the application at a place within the state other than its usual
- 129 courtroom if it would facilitate the presence of the respondent. Such
- 130 court shall cause a citation and notice to be served upon the
- respondent by personal service made by a state marshal, constable or
- an indifferent person not less than seven days prior to such hearing
- 133 date.
- (b) The court shall direct notice by [certified] first class mail to the
- following: (1) The parents of the respondent, provided the parents are
- 136 not the applicants; (2) the spouse of the respondent, provided the
- spouse is not the applicant; (3) children of the respondent, if any; and
- 138 (4) the person in charge of the hospital, nursing home, residential
- facility or other institution in which the respondent may reside.
- (c) The court shall order such notice as it directs to the following: (1)
- 141 The applicant; and (2) the siblings of the respondent or their
- representatives, if the respondent has no living parents, and the spouse
- or children of the respondent.
- 144 (d) The court in its discretion may order such notice as it directs to
- other persons having an interest in the respondent.
- Sec. 5. Subsections (c) and (d) of section 45a-716 of the general
- statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
- 148 (*Effective October 1, 2007*):

(c) Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, notice of the hearing and a copy of the petition, certified by the petitioner, the petitioner's agent or attorney, or the clerk of the court, shall be served at least ten days before the date of the hearing by personal service or service at the person's usual place of abode on the persons enumerated in subsection (b) of this section who are within the state, and by [certified] first class mail [, return receipt requested,] on the Commissioner of Children and Families and the Attorney General. If the address of any person entitled to personal service or service at the person's usual place of abode is unknown, or if personal service or service at the person's usual place of abode cannot be reasonably effected within the state, or if any person enumerated in subsection (b) of this section is out of the state, a judge or the clerk of the court shall order notice to be given by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or by publication at least ten days before the date of the hearing. Any such publication shall be in a newspaper of general circulation in the place of the last-known address of the person to be notified, whether within or without this state, or, if no such address is known, in the place where the petition has been filed.

(d) In any proceeding pending in the Court of Probate, in lieu of personal service on, or at the usual place of abode of, a parent or the father of a child born out of wedlock who is either a petitioner or who signs under penalty of false statement a written waiver of personal service on a form provided by the Probate Court Administrator, the court may order notice to be given by [certified] <u>first class mail</u> [, return receipt requested, deliverable to addressee only,] at least ten days before the date of the hearing. If such delivery cannot reasonably be effected, or if the whereabouts of the parents is unknown, notice shall be ordered to be given by publication as provided in subsection (c) of this section.

Sec. 6. Subsection (c) of section 17a-11 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2007*):

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(c) Not more than one hundred twenty days after admitting a child or youth on a voluntary basis, the department shall petition the probate court for the district in which a parent or guardian of the child or youth resides for a determination as to whether continuation in care is in the child's or youth's best interest and, if so, whether there is an appropriate case service or permanency plan. A case service plan shall be required for all children and youths receiving services voluntarily from the department who are not in an out-of-home placement. A permanency plan shall be required for all children and youths voluntarily admitted to the department and placed by the department in a foster home licensed pursuant to section 17a-114 or a facility licensed pursuant to section 17a-145 or 17a-154. Upon receipt of such application, the court shall set a time and place for hearing to be held within thirty days of receipt of the application, unless continued by the court for cause shown. The court shall order notice of the hearing to be given by [regular] first class mail at least five days prior to the hearing to the Commissioner of Children and Families, and by [certified] first class mail [, return receipt requested,] at least five days prior to the hearing to the parents or guardian of the child and the minor, if over twelve years of age. If the whereabouts of the parent or guardian are unknown, or if delivery cannot reasonably be effected, then notice shall be ordered to be given by publication. In making its determination, the court shall consider the items specified in subsection (d) of this section. The court shall possess continuing jurisdiction in proceedings under this section.

Sec. 7. Section 46b-150 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2007*):

Any minor who has reached such minor's sixteenth birthday and is residing in this state, or any parent or guardian of such minor, may petition the superior court for juvenile matters or the probate court for the district in which either the minor or the parents or guardian of such minor resides for a determination that the minor named in the petition be emancipated. The petition shall be verified and shall state plainly: (1) The facts which bring the minor within the jurisdiction of

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the court, (2) the name, date of birth, sex and residence of the minor, (3) the name and residence of the minor's parent, parents or guardian, and (4) the name of the petitioner and the petitioner's relationship to the minor. Upon the filing of the petition in the Superior Court, the court shall cause a summons to be issued to the minor and the minor's parent, parents or guardian, in the manner provided in section 46b-128. Service on an emancipation petition filed in the superior court for juvenile matters pursuant to this section shall not be required on the petitioning party. Upon the filing of the petition in the Probate Court, the court shall assign a time, not later than thirty days thereafter, and a place for hearing such petition. The court shall cause a citation and notice to be served on the minor and the minor's parent, if the parent is not the petitioner, by personal service or service at the minor's place of abode and the parent's place of abode, at least seven days prior to the hearing date, by a state marshal, constable or indifferent person. The court shall direct notice by [certified] first class mail to the parent, if the parent is the petitioner. The court shall order such notice as it directs to: (A) The Commissioner of Children and Families, (B) the Attorney General, and (C) other persons having an interest in the minor. The Attorney General may file an appearance and shall be and remain a party to the action if the child is receiving or has received aid or care from the state, or if the child is receiving child support enforcement services, as defined in subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of section 46b-231.

Sec. 8. Subsection (a) of section 46b-172a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2007*):

(a) Any person claiming to be the father of a child born out of wedlock may at any time, but no later than sixty days after the date of notice under section 45a-716, as amended by this act, file a claim for paternity with the court of probate for the district in which either the mother or the child resides, on forms provided by such court. The claim shall contain the claimant's name and address, the name and last-known address of the mother and the month and year of the birth

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or expected birth of the child. Not later than five days after the filing of a claim for paternity, the judge of the court of probate shall cause a certified copy of such claim to be [mailed by certified mail to] served upon the mother or prospective mother of such child [at the last-known address shown on the claim for paternity] by personal service or service at her usual place of abode, and to the Attorney General by first class mail. The Attorney General may file an appearance and shall be and remain a party to the action if the child is receiving or has received aid or care from the state, or if the child is receiving child support enforcement services, as defined in subdivision (2) of subsection (b) of section 46b-231. The claim for paternity shall be admissible in any action for paternity under section 46b-160, and shall estop the claimant from denying his paternity of such child and shall contain language that he acknowledges liability for contribution to the support and education of the child after its birth and for contribution to the pregnancy-related medical expenses of the mother.

Sec. 9. Subsection (a) of section 45a-92 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2007*):

Each person who is a judge of probate at any time during any calendar year shall file with the Probate Court Administrator on or before [March] April first of the succeeding year a statement signed under penalty of false statement showing the actual gross receipts and itemized costs of his or her office and the net income for each such calendar year. If such person ceases to hold office, he or she shall also file with the Probate Court Administrator, on or before [March] April first of the second and third years next following, a statement signed under penalty of false statement showing his or her net income from his or her former office for the first and second calendar years next following the calendar year in which he or she ceased to hold office. At the time of filing, each such person shall pay to the State Treasurer as hereinafter provided the sum required by this section, less sums previously paid to the State Treasurer on account. Payment shall be credited by the State Treasurer to the fund established by section

284 45a-82.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:				
Section 1	October 1, 2007	45a-607(c)		
Sec. 2	October 1, 2007	45a-609(b)		
Sec. 3	October 1, 2007	45a-616(c)		
Sec. 4	October 1, 2007	45a-671		
Sec. 5	October 1, 2007	45a-716(c) and (d)		
Sec. 6	October 1, 2007	17a-11(c)		
Sec. 7	October 1, 2007	46b-150		
Sec. 8	October 1, 2007	46b-172a(a)		
Sec. 9	October 1, 2007	45a-92(a)		

JUD Joint Favorable Subst.

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 08 \$	FY 09 \$
Probate Court	PCAF -	Minimal	Minimal
	Cost/Savings		

Note: PCAF=Probate Court Administration Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill makes changes to the manner in which giving notice in various probate matters are delivered. In certain matters the change in notification could result in a minimal savings to the probate courts, as delivery may be less costly.

However, there are instances such as filing a claim for paternity by a putative father, where the bill requires personal or abode service instead of notice by certified mail. This change may result in a minimal cost to the probate courts, as the new required methods of delivery can be more costly. Therefore, it is unknown how many of each instance will occur; the net impact to the probate court system is indeterminate.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

OLR Bill Analysis sSB 1438

AN ACT CONCERNING NOTICE OF CERTAIN PROBATE COURT HEARINGS AND THE FILING OF CERTAIN REPORTS.

SUMMARY:

This bill changes the method for notifying parties in connection with various probate court proceedings. In the following proceedings, it (1) allows service at an individual's usual place of abode ("abode service") in those instances where current law requires personal service and (2) requires first class mail, instead of regular mail or certified mail, return receipt requested, for those instances that currently require notice by certified mail or regular mail:

- 1. temporary custody of a minor pending an application to probate court for the removing a guardian or terminating parental rights;
- 2. application for removal of parent as guardian;
- 3. appointment of guardian or co-guardians for a minor;
- 4. application for guardianship of a mentally retarded person;
- 5. petition to terminate parental rights;
- 6. Department of Family and Children (DCF) petition to determinate if continuing to care for a child or youth voluntarily admitted to DCF is in the child's or youth's best interest and, if so, whether there is an appropriate case service or permanency plan; and
- 7. emancipation of a minor.

The bill requires personal or abode service instead of notice by certified mail in one instance and notice by first class mail instead of

certified mail in another instance regarding filing a claim for paternity by a putative father.

Finally, the bill delays from March 1 to April 1 of the following year, the date by which probate judges must file a statement of the actual gross receipts and itemized costs of his or her office and the net income for each such calendar year. It also delays from March 1 to April 1 the date by which a probate judge who ceases to hold office must file on the second and third years following the year he ceased to hold office a statement showing his or her net probate court income from the two years. The statements must be filed with the probate court administrator and signed under penalty of false statement.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2007

§ 1 — TEMPORARY CUSTODY OF A MINOR PENDING AN APPLICATION TO PROBATE COURT FOR THE REMOVAL OF A GUARDIAN OR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS

Under current law, in a hearing for temporary custody of a minor, the court must order notice by regular mail to the DCF commissioner and by personal service by a state marshal, a constable, or other legally authorized officer to both parents and to the minor child, if over 12 years of age, at least five days before the hearing date.

The bill, instead, requires notice by first class mail to the DCF commissioner and allows abode or service at the parent's usual place of abode or the minor's usual place of abode, as the case may be.

Under current law, if a parent or the father of a minor child born out of wedlock who is either an applicant or who signs under penalty of false statement a written waiver of personal service on a form provided by the probate court administrator, the court may order notice to be given by certified mail, return receipt requested, deliverable to addressee only, at least five days prior to the date of the hearing.

The bill, instead, allows notice to be given by first class mail if personal or abode service is waived.

§ 2 — APPLICATION FOR REMOVAL OF PARENT AS GUARDIAN

In a hearing on an application to remove a parent or guardian, current law requires the court to order notice by regular mail to the DCF commissioner and by personal service to both parents and the minor, if over 12 years of age, at least 10 days before the hearing. The bill, instead, requires notice by personal service or service at the parent's usual place of abode or the minor's usual place of abode, as the case may be.

Under current law, instead of personal service on a parent or the father of a child born out of wedlock who is either a petitioner or who signs under oath a written waiver of personal service on a form provided by the probate court administrator, the court may order notice to be given by certified mail, return receipt requested, at least 10 days before the hearing date. The bill, instead, allows notice to be given if personal or abode service is waived by first class mail.

Under current law, if the parents reside out of or are absent from the state, the court must order notice to be given by certified mail, return receipt requested at least 10 days before the date of the hearing. The bill allows notice by first class mail instead.

§ 3 — APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN OR CO-GUARDIANS FOR A MINOR

The bill requires the court to order notice of the hearing to be given to the minor, if over 12 years of age, by first class mail instead of by certified mail, return receipt requested, deliverable to the addressee only, at least 10 days before the date of the hearing. It requires notice by first class instead of regular mail to be given to the petitioner and all other parties in interest known by the court.

§ 4 — APPLICATION FOR GUARDIANSHIP OF A MENTALLY RETARDED PERSON

The bill requires the probate court to order notice by first class mail, instead of certified mail, regarding the appointment of a guardian of a mentally retarded person to the following:

- 1. the respondent's parents, if they are not the applicants;
- 2. the respondent's spouse, if the spouse is not the applicant;
- 3. the respondent's children, if any; and
- 4. the person in charge of the hospital, nursing home, residential facility, or other institution in which the respondent may reside.

§ 5 — PETITION TO TERMINATE PARENTAL RIGHTS

Regarding petitions to terminate parental rights, the bill requires that notice of the hearing and a copy of the petition, certified by the petitioner, the petitioner's agent or attorney, or the court clerk must be served at least 10 days before the hearing by personal service or abode service on the following persons who are within Connecticut:

- 1. the minor child's parent or parents, including any parent removed as guardian;
- 2. the father of any minor child born out of wedlock, if at the time of the filing of the petition (a) he was adjudicated the father by a court of competent jurisdiction, (b) he has acknowledged in writing that he is the father, (c) he has contributed child support regularly, (e) his name appears on the child's birth certificate, (f) he has filed a paternity claim, or (g) he has been named in the petition as the father of the child by the mother; and
- 3. the guardian or any other person whom the court deems appropriate.

The bill requires notice by first class mail, instead of certified mail, return receipt requested, on the commissioner of Children and Families and the attorney general.

Under current law, the court may order notice to be given by certified mail return receipt requested, deliverable to addressee only to a parent or the father of a child born out of wedlock who (1) is either a petitioner or (2) signs under penalty of false statement a waiver of

personal service. The bill instead allows service by first class mail if personal or abode service is waived.

§ 6 — DCF PETITION TO DETERMINATE IF CONTINUATION OF CARE FOR A CHILD VOLUNTARILY ADMITTED TO DCF IS IN THE CHILD'S BEST INTEREST

The bill requires the court to order notice of the hearing to be given by first class, instead of regular, mail at least five days before the hearing to the DCF commissioner, and by first class mail, instead of certified mail, return receipt requested, at least five days before the hearing to the parents or guardian of the child and the minor, if over age 12.

§ 7 — EMANCIPATION OF A MINOR

Current law requires the court to cause notice of an emancipation hearing to be served on the minor and the minor's parent, if the parent is not the petitioner, at least seven days before the hearing date, by a state marshal, constable, or indifferent person. The bill specifies that this may be by either personal service or service at the minor's place of abode and the parent's place of abode.

The bill requires the court to direct notice by first class mail instead of certified mail to the parent, if the parent is the petitioner.

By law, the court may order whatever notice it directs to the DCF commissioner, the attorney general, and other persons having an interest in the minor.

§ 8 — FILING A CLAIM FOR PATERNITY BY A PUTATIVE FATHER

Current law requires that within five days after the filing of a claim for paternity, the judge must order a certified copy of the claim to be mailed by certified mail to the mother or prospective mother of such child at the last-known address shown on the claim for paternity and to the Attorney General. The bill instead requires personal or abode service on the mother or prospective mother and service by first class mail on the Attorney General.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 40 Nay 0 (04/11/2007)